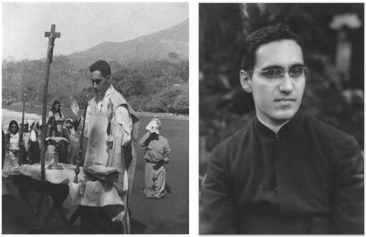



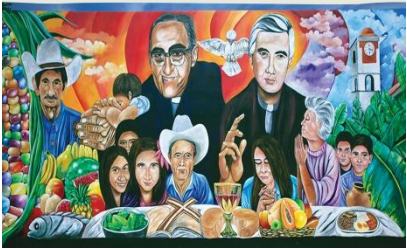




Romero Notes

Slide 1		<p>SCIAF, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund, is the official aid agency for the Catholic Church in Scotland. SCIAF helps families in poor countries to grow enough food to eat, to get an education and to recover when disaster strikes.</p>
Slide 2	<p>Our Patron</p>  <p>St Óscar Romero</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Born 15th August 1917 + Archbishop of San Salvador, El Salvador + Canonized by Pope Francis in 2018 + Feast day 24th March 	<p>SCIAF have two patrons who inspire our work and guide us –Saint Margaret of Scotland and Saint Óscar Romero, seen in the picture here. ‘Romero,’ as he is popularly known, was a 20th century Latin American Archbishop who stood up for the poor and marginalized people of El Salvador. We’ll learn more about his life and death and the continued impact he has on the world today.</p>
Slide 3		<p>(CLICK) <i>República de El Salvador</i>, more commonly called El Salvador by English speakers, is home to around 6.5 million people. It’s the smallest country in Central America and sits along the Pacific coast. It shares borders with Guatemala and Honduras. The official language is Spanish and the majority of people identify as Roman Catholic.</p>
Slide 4	<p>El Salvador</p> 	<p>During the late 1970’s the Salvadoran people faced terrible violence from para-militaries. People were often killed or disappeared from their homes. The civil war lasted for more than 12 years and saw extreme violence from both sides.</p> <p>During the civil war, civilians were terrorized and deliberately targeted by death squads. Saint Óscar Romero spoke out against the fighting at the start of the war and stood with the most marginalized communities as government repression, armed conflict and censorship began to take hold .</p>

Slide 5	<p>Saint Óscar Romero</p> 	<p>Saint Óscar Romero was born in 1917 in San Miguel, El Salvador. At the age of 14 he entered the youth seminary of San Miguel and was eventually ordained a priest in 1942. He was first assigned as a priest in his hometown where he quickly grew a reputation for his passionate sermons.</p>
Slide 6	<p>Saint Óscar Romero</p> 	<p>Over time, Romero was appointed as a Bishop in the capital city of San Salvador where he gained popularity among the conservative and elite upper class of El Salvador. They saw Romero as sympathetic to their views given his notable critiques of 'politicized priests' who were encouraging the laity to take an active role in bringing about changes to El Salvador's social and political systems.</p> <p>When Romero was made Archbishop of San Salvador in February 1977, many believed he would curb the church of the liberation theology movement that had taken root.</p>
Slide 7	<p>Saint Óscar Romero</p> 	<p>However, things began to change when just one month later, Romero's friend, Fr Rutilio Grande, SJ, and two companions were ambushed and killed on their way to Mass. Fr Grande had been very outspoken against the government on behalf of the poor and many believed this led to his assassination.</p> <p>After the murder of his friend, Romero refused to attend any government ceremonies or events, which fuelled tension between the Archbishop and political powers as well as conservatives within the church.</p>
Slide 8	<p>Saint Óscar Romero</p>  <p>"...I will not abandon my people, rather I will run the same risks with them that my ministry requires." <i>St Óscar Romero (1979)</i></p>	<p>By the end of 1979, things were becoming increasingly more violent and Romero was receiving death threats. Despite these and other dangers, he continued to speak out against injustice. He said, <i>"I want to clarify one point. The news of death threats to my person have been much repeated... I want to assure you, and I ask your prayers that I be faithful to this promise, that I will not abandon my people, rather I will run the same risks with them that my ministry requires."</i> (11 November 1979)</p>

Slide 9	<p>Saint Óscar Romero</p> 	<p>Óscar Romero was assassinated on the 24 March 1980. Romero was murdered by a single shot fired at him while he celebrated Mass in the Hospital of Divine Providence in San Salvador.</p> <p><i>Note: A 1992 Truth Commission looking into the most serious human rights violations that occurred during the war concluded that Romero's death had been ordered by the Alianza Republicana Nacionalista (National Republican Alliance, ARENA), a conservative government party who were connected with death squads and military intelligence groups.</i></p> <p>On the day before he died Romero asked the government and the army to stop the violence against the people in El Salvador. He said,</p> <p><i>"In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people whose cries rise to heaven more loudly each day, I beg you, I implore you, I order you, in the name of God, stop the repression!"</i></p>
Slide 10	<p>Saint Óscar Romero</p> 	<p>Romero was buried in the Cathedral of San Salvador on 30 March 1980. Over 250,000 people came to say a final farewell. During the ceremony there was an explosion and shots were fired. More than 30 people were killed and many more injured. Witnesses claimed that army snipers fired from the roof of the National Palace.</p>
Slide 11	<p>Canonisation</p> 	<p>After Romero was killed many people called for him to be made a saint, however there was also a great deal of resistance within the church by those who opposed his theology and felt his assassination was ordered for political rather than religious motives.</p> <p>However, in 2015, Pope Francis declared Óscar Romero a martyr saying that he was killed, <i>"in hatred of the faith."</i> Just three years later in 2018, Pope Francis canonized Óscar Romero along with six others.</p>

Slide 12	<p>Salvadoran Martyrs</p> 	<p>In 2020, Pope Francis also declared that Fr Rutilio Grande, SJ and his companions, Manuel Solorzano and Nelson Lemus, were martyred in hatred of the faith as well. This opens the way to them being officially recognised as 'Blessed.'</p>
Slide 13	<p>El Salvador Today</p> 	<p>Since Romero's death, gangs and cartels have expanded their influence and violence continues in El Salvador to this day. The country currently has one of the world's highest murder rates with poor and marginalized communities most strongly affected.</p> <p>Romero's impact can still be felt both in El Salvador and around Latin America where he has been informally named 'San Romero de las Americas.'</p> <p><i>(note, la Virgen de Guadalupe (the Virgin of Guadalupe) is the official Patron Saint of North America while St Rose of Lima is the Patron Saint of South America)</i></p> <p>Many murals can be found of him throughout El Salvador, depicting his life, assassination and the community he fought for. They also often contain his quotes, such as this one which reads: "If they kill me, I will rise in my people."</p>

Slide 14	 <p>"He's shown the Church that they must always fight for the poor people in the community." <i>Tina Hernandez</i></p>	<p>Many Salvadorans keep Saint Óscar Romero's memory and example alive in the face of continued violence. Tina Hernandez was fortunate enough to meet Romero. She says:</p> <p><i>"When I was 19, Óscar Romero came to celebrate Mass in my community. I united the local children and brought them along. He saw that I was trying to inspire young people and we started talking about God and our faith. He was like a saint to me. He was so friendly and calm, and really understood what people were saying."</i></p> <p><i>It's difficult to find words to describe the impact he's had on El Salvador. The Church now has a stronger position in the community. He's shown the Church that they must always fight for the poor people in the community. He taught the people and the Church to love each other."</i></p>
Slide 15	 <p>Saint Óscar Romero</p>	<p>Saint Óscar Romero was faithful to God and to his community until his death. Even though it was difficult, he never walked away from the path before him—the path of righteousness and faithfulness to the Lord. Romero's death while celebrating Mass shows us how deeply committed he was to the Sacrament and the promise of the Resurrection.</p> <p>May we look to St Óscar Romero for inspiration in our own lives when we too are faced with difficult paths to follow and fear of doing what we know is right. Let his unwavering faith in God provide you with comfort and inspiration during your own trials in this life.</p>
Slide 16	 <p>Loving God, Give us the strength to be humble, to be faithful, to stand with our sisters and brothers. Give us the strength to be like our brother, Óscar, completely committed to Christ. Saint Óscar Romero, Pray for us. Amen</p>	<p>Please join me in this prayer to St Óscar Romero. Let us not only ask for him to strengthen our own faith but to bring peace and healing to the people of El Salvador.</p> <p>Prayer taken from Ignatian Solidarity Network St Óscar Romero Prayer Cards</p>